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give each other sympathy in their affliction. If one was castrated alone, he would die of grief. The Betsileo have a similar belief, but I could not learn whether it was universal among the Tanala. 825

Most of the Tanala territory is poorly suited to cattle culture because of the heavy forest and constant rain. It is only along the western margin of their lands, where they border on the plateau, that one finds real grazing country. The Tanala herds are usually small and, although cattle have great social significance, they contribute little to the physical well-being of the people. They are only killed in connection with ceremonies, and the average Tanala does not taste beef once a month. Indeed, cattle killings are so rare that to dream of cutting or eating beef is a bad omen, presaging a funeral in the family. Hides are so little used that, until European traders provided a market for them, it was customary to cut up the animals without flaying them and cook meat and skin together. 233 311 [262] [787] [439]

The Menabe consider milk a luxury, and it is almost impossible to purchase it in their territory. It is a by-product, taken only when the cow seems to have more than enough to feed her calf. Milking, like everything else connected with cattle, is done exclusively by men. The explanation given for this is that it is a dangerous occupation. Actually, it is a laborious process, requiring three persons. One man holds the calf where the cow can see and lick it, another milks, usually squatting on the right side, and a third holds the cow's tail over her back and gently rubs her vagina with his fingers. The milk is boiled at once, while still warm. It is considered disgusting to drink it fresh. After boiling, it is either drunk or cooked with rice. 234 462 [252]

The Ikongo make more use of milk and are somewhat more expert at milking, although they use the same method. They rarely boil their milk. A little is drunk fresh, but most of it is deliberately soured. A little sour milk is always left in the milking gourd so that the new milk turns almost at once. The curds are eaten with a spoon and the whey drunk. None of the Tanala know how to make butter or cheese. 234 252 [204]

Apparently cow's milk was rarely if ever used to supplement or replace mother's milk in feeding nursing infants. The idea has recently been borrowed from Europeans, but it is still considered rather unnatural and is used only as a last resort. 853 177

The wheel and plow were unknown in Madagascar prior to European contact. The Tanala never use their cattle for draught or transport and this holds for the rest of the island, with one or two exceptions. The Imerina and Betsileo now use ox carts and 177 492

from reign to reign. The most influential of the royal *Anakandriana* were called the *Anakandriambe*. 646

ELECTION OF THE KING

The following account of the election and investiture of an Ikongo king is quoted from the manuscript of Sadaro Antoine: "When a king had died the *Anakandriambe* summoned all the *Anakandriana* and *Notables* of the two castes in the kingdom to choose a new king. The *hovaloky* [nobles] assembled in one house and the *rakoaka* in another. The commoners deliberated as to who should be king and when they had decided went to the house where the nobles were assembled and designated for the office the one they liked best. This man was separated from his comrades and taken to a house in the corner of the village. There he stayed, rarely going out, until he was invested with office. A few days after the election the whole population constructed a large house, the *trano be*, or *lapa*, to be the royal residence. 643

"On a fortunate day selected by an *ombiasy*, everyone went to the village of the new *Mpanaka* to celebrate his solemn entry into the *lapa*. About noon all the *Notables* entered the house where the future king was. The *Anakandriambe* placed the *satro mena* [a red hat with a tassel] on his head, dressed him in an *akanjo joky* [a dark red garment like a long shirt or smock], a *lamba mena* [shoulder blanket of red silk], and *sambavira lamba mena* [shawl of red silk]. They placed a silver necklace on his neck and a silver bracelet on his right wrist, and gave him a *tokim-bolafotsy* [long ebony staff encrusted with tin or silver] to carry. When everything was ready the king seated himself on his *filamana* [carrying chair] which was usually the house door, and the *rakoaka* carried him to the royal house. They formed a procession with the chief *Anakandriambe* first, then the king's wife, on foot, then the king, followed by his escort of *Notables*, etc., and then the whole population, singing. They sounded conch shell trumpets and fired guns. The young people sang and danced to the *sodina* [flute] and *drasina* [a variety of large drum]. A public fête was organized in the village. Before entering the royal dwelling the king, followed by the population, walked around the house three times. Each time he arrived opposite the east side of the house he halted and fired a shot in the air. The first shot was in honor of the king, the second in honor of the *Anakandriana*, and the third in honor of the people as a whole. If the first shot failed to go off, it was a bad sign for the king. He would have a misfortune 643 527 643 527 787

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643 527 787 or would not reign long. The *ombiasy* might change his destiny by bathing him with water containing magical materials, but he was sometimes dismissed then and there and another king chosen.

643 527 782 "The king entered the house by the big door on the east, taking care to place his left foot on the door sill first. He seated himself on the eastern side of the house on a clean mat, his counselors on the right and his wife on the left. An ox was tied to the *fatora* with its head east. [The *fatora* was a pointed post about six feet high, usually made of *tsa* wood. It was set up east of the royal house to commemorate the ancestors.] The *Anakandriana* left the house. They threw water on the roof of the house and on the ox three times, while the chief *Anakandriambe* said: 'Oh *Zanahary* of the east, the south, the north and the west, come assist at this ceremony. We have chosen one to direct us, to counsel us and to protect us. We offer you an ox *lava trafo* [lit. with a long hump, i.e., fat]. We ask your protection that our new king may live and reign long, that we may be protected from all dangers, that the army of the Imerina may not come to our region, that the wild pigs and locusts may not injure our plantations, that we may be exempt from all sickness, that our women may have many children and that our wealth may be increased.' After making this invocation the *Anakandriambe* entered the house and the young men of *hova* caste killed the ox and cut up the meat. Rice and pieces of the meat were cooked and placed on a leaf of the Traveler's Palm or a clean china plate. This was then put on a handsome mat before the east door of the house. Everyone then uncovered his head and stood silent. The *Anakandriambe* advanced and addressed the *razana* [ancestral spirits]. He invited all the ancestors of the king to take part in the repast. He explained why they had been called, then asked their protection, good fortune and prosperity. When the prayer was finished a great quantity of rice and meat was cooked and the king offered *toaka* [sugar cane rum] to the *Anakandriana*, the singers and dancers. There was a great feast. There was a great uproar in the royal house, ending in shouts of laughter. The next day the king and his family gave two or three cattle to the people. These were killed [not sacrificed] and the meat distributed to everyone. The people then returned home talking of the incidents of the ceremony."

643 There seems to have been no formal procedure for deposing an undesirable king and it was extremely rare in practice. Kings were selected with great care and were watched and admonished by the

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Their memorial stones are erected anywhere and are not used for sacrifices to the ancestors as a whole. Many of their sacrifices are made at pointed wooden posts, about 5 feet high and 3 inches in diameter. Numbers of these posts are to be seen in their villages. In some cases each family has one or more, erected to the east of the dwelling. Apparently both the *tsesoka* and *sorona* rites are employed, but I was unable to learn whether temporary altars were built, how the offerings were arranged, etc. The sacrifices are performed by hereditary priests under the direction of *ombiasy*, as among the Menabe. 778 782

SACRIFICES TO INDIVIDUAL SPIRITS

Sacrifices to individual spirits seem to be fairly common among the Menabe, although they are of less importance than those made to the ancestors as a whole. Apparently the Ikongo have similar ideas and practices, but no exact information could be obtained. The Menabe honor both ancestral and non-ancestral spirits. 782 769

Sacrifices to individual ancestors may be made because the ghost has demanded them, to placate a malicious or offended ghost, or in fulfilment of a vow. In general, the appearance of an ancestor in a dream or vision is interpreted as a demand for a sacrifice. If the apparition has not made its wishes known, the person who has seen it will consult an *ombiasy* as to the sort of sacrifice required, the proper place, etc. *Ombiasy* are believed to be in close touch with the ancestral spirits, who visit them from time to time and, through them, demand sacrifices from specified descendants. After such a visit, the *ombiasy* notifies the victim, who is bound to comply with the demand, under penalty of sickness or other misfortune. Persons bilked in this way often grumble and may even ask the ghost for a postponement, but they do not seem to doubt the genuineness of the communication. The belief offers a good opportunity for blackmail and one informant remarked cynically that it seemed to be only the ancestors of the rich who demanded sacrifices through *ombiasy*. The *ombiasy* may also decide, by divination, that an illness, or persistent ill fortune, is due to the malevolent activity of a special ghost and advise that a sacrifice be made to placate it. 782 769 787 [191]

Vows to individual ancestors are commonest in time of sudden danger. They arise from a feeling that a close relative, as a father or grandfather, will be more attentive and helpful than the ancestors as a whole. The greatest vow is that to erect a memorial stone, because of the expense involved. Informants knew only one instance of such a promise. Commonly an ox is vowed. 782 769

It is thought that the souls of such persons reside in their memorial stones. The suppliant approaches the stone and slaps it several times with his open hand, to awaken the spirit. If he does this properly, his request is sure to be granted. He then says: "Listen, listen, so-and-so. I am going on a journey [giving details of his route, etc.]. If I come back safe and the trip is a success, I will bring here and sacrifice to you so much honey [or snuff, rum, etc.]." When the prayer has been granted, the vower makes the offering himself, with no ceremony except a second awakening of the spirit and a brief announcement. 782 769

OMBIASY

The term *ombiasy* signifies a medicine-man or magician. The Menabe recognize two main classes, *ombiasy manenapatra* and *ombiasy mpaikidy*. The latter are divided into *ombiasy sdolo* and *ombiasy sikoto*. All the types of *ombiasy* include both men and women. Men are more numerous, but some of the most famous are women. 756 791

The *ombiasy manenapatra* are spiritualist mediums. They are usually marked by some slight mental or nervous abnormality. No special training is required and they begin practicing as soon as they become conscious of their powers. Their main activity is the discovery of the cause of illness and the means for curing it. Informants thought that they might be appealed to in other matters, but could give no instances. 756

Seances are held in the *ombiasy's* house, always at night. The *ombiasy* spreads a mat in the northeast corner of the house, placing on it a bottle of rum and certain charms. He sits beside it or lies on it. Sometimes both *ombiasy* and mat are covered with a tent-like mosquito net of raffia cloth. This tent is about 5 feet high and comes down to the floor, giving complete concealment. The sick person and his relatives seat themselves on the floor, apparently without any fixed order, and the fire and all lights are extinguished. The people begin clapping and singing softly. After a time a knocking is heard on the walls, or voices are heard repeating: "We have come. We have come." There are sometimes as many as ten or twelve spirits, distinguishable by their different voices. The voices are nasal and seem to come from the east or west of the *ombiasy*, sometimes high, sometimes low, but never far from him. The head of the family, or the sick person, then tells the spirits why they have been called. After this the *ombiasy* explains the situation fully and 755 787

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755 the spirits tell the cause of the illness and the medicine to be given,
767 always speaking. If the sick person is not present, the *ombiasy* tells the spirits to go and look at him, and he will be conscious of cold hands touching him all over. After answering the questions, the spirits drink the rum, dance and sing. The dancing and singing are accompanied by rhythmic rappings on the floor and walls, but always near the *ombiasy*. If a great deal of rum has been provided the spirits may pass it around to the living after they have drunk all they wish. If there is a doubter present they will seize his wrist when he reaches out for the cup. Finally they say they are tired and must go, and troop off noisily. The spirits are the souls of ancestors, but no individuals can be identified.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of this belief is the large number of natives who are, or have been, skeptical as to the authenticity of the phenomena. I found this quite common among persons who had had little or no contact with outsiders and am convinced that it is not due to European influence. It is reflected in the general attitude toward the *ombiasy mananpatra*, who rank far below the *ombiasy mpisikidy* in popular estimation. Several informants declared flatly that the seances were faked and that the *ombiasy* produced the voices, etc., himself. Others had been skeptical, but had been convinced by personal knowledge of cures or by having felt the spirit hands during seances. The stories told by the latter were curiously similar to our own spiritualists' accounts of ectoplasm. They said that the hands of the spirits were strong but so soft that they seemed boneless and that their flesh was moist, excessively cold, and had a different texture from human skin.

767 Within the last twenty-five or thirty years another type of *ombiasy mananpatra* has come into existence. At one end of most Tanala houses there is a shelf or partial ceiling which forms a dark loft about 8 feet deep and 6 feet above the floor. The practitioner places a mat here with charms on it and the spirits come and rest on it. The spirits whistle or make cheeping noises when persons enter the house. If the intruder is frightened or runs away the *ombiasy* reassures him and tells him that it is only the spirits asking who has come. He puts questions to them and interprets their whistling answers. They are present both day and night. Apparently *ombiasy ndolo* are beginning to adopt this trick. It is said to be of foreign [177] origin but I know of nothing like it among the neighboring tribes. Intelligent natives are even more skeptical of it than of the regular seances.

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competition. There is usually only one *ombiasy* in a village and never more than two. I could learn of no case in which two *ombiasy* had pitted themselves against each other, at least publicly. 791

Even in the old days of constant intertribal warfare there were a few foreign *ombiasy* operating among the Tanala. Most of these belonged to the Antaimorona tribe, which still enjoys a great reputation for magic. They are said to have been responsible for the introduction of a regular calendar of lucky and unlucky days. The foreigners were looked up to and could command higher fees for both services and instruction than the native trained men. They were especially in demand when a new village was to be founded. By similar reasoning, Tanala *ombiasy* who had settled among the Betsileo were thought superior by that tribe. 791 177

ACTIVITIES OF THE OMBIASY

DIVINATION

Divination is probably the most important of all the *ombiasy's* activities, for it is the prerequisite for nearly all the others. By means of it the *ombiasy* discovers the cause of illness, the hazards which will attend a journey or business enterprise, the chances of a person in love, etc., and deduces which remedy or charm will prove most effective under the circumstances. 787 165

The Tanala word for divination of all sorts is *sikidy*, a term applied to both the process and the mechanical means used. The Ikongo practice three forms, divination by water, divination by sand, and divination by seeds. The Menabe say that only divination by seeds is native and very few of their *ombiasy* know any other form. Haruspication is altogether lacking and there is no real divination from the flight of birds, etc., although certain acts of birds and animals are considered ominous.

Divination by water is rare and has apparently been borrowed from the southeast coast tribes in very recent times. Water is put in a clear glass bottle, shaken vigorously and then held up and examined. Some practitioners do not look directly at the bottle but study its reflection in a small mirror. The answer is deduced from the movement of the water, its cloudiness, the way in which sediment collects, etc. Apparently each practitioner has his own rules.

In divination by sand, a thin layer of dry sand, usually black, is spread smoothly over a wooden tray. The operator makes marks at random with a small stick, or his finger, and studies the resulting patterns. I was unable to learn the rules, but suspect that it has a

787 755 definite arithmetical basis. It is a rare form and has been borrowed from the southeast coast tribes. These tribes probably borrowed it from the Arabs, whose influence is strong there.

Divination by seeds is by far the commonest and is known to all *ombiasy*. There are two forms, one relatively simple, which the Tanala claim is aboriginal, and one complex. The latter is unquestionably of Arab origin. It is commonly used by the Ikongo, but few Menabe *ombiasy* are familiar with it.

In the simpler form of seed divination, the seeds of a tree called *rakiaka* are used. These seeds are about 5/8 inch long by 5/8 inch wide. The color is a medium brown and they acquire a high polish with use. There are usually about fifty seeds in a set, although it is forbidden for the *ombiasy* ever to count them or know the exact number. They are kept in a small bag, or a little bottle-shaped basket with a long neck and a cap-like cover (Fig. 23, b). The top of the cover is often woven in the shape of a hand or in some other fanciful form. Rarely the seeds are kept in a small gourd or a wooden box similar to those for fire making sets. A quartz crystal and a piece of *hazomanga* wood are always kept in the basket with the seeds and some *ombiasy* add other objects as well. The crystal is believed to make the *sikidy* see more clearly, while the *hazomanga* strengthens it and is also used in divination for sickness.

In divining, the *ombiasy* pours out the seeds in a pile on a mat and mixes them gently with his hands, repeating the following invocation: "Rise up, *Alasoa*. [This is an archaic Tanala name for this form of divination. It is no longer used except in the ritual.] While you were on the tree you were not eaten by the lemurs and on the ground you were not devoured by the wild boars. You are the son of the sister of *Zanakary*. I am the son of the sister of man. You sleep in a basket and I sleep on a mat. Your dreams are not my dreams and my dreams are not your dreams. Rise, a sick person has come. Say what is the cause of the evil."

After this, the *ombiasy* takes a handful of seeds at random and begins to take the seeds away in groups of three. The remainder, one, two or three seeds, is laid in a pile on the mat. The process is then repeated and the next remainder laid to the right of the first. This continues until eight piles have been laid out in a row. The *ombiasy* then takes the crystal and lays it between the fourth and fifth piles, with its long axis at right angles to the row. He then begins a new row, laying the first pile below pile 8 and continuing to the left until sixteen piles have been made.

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FIG. 23. Ceremonial Objects. a, Sacrificial Ladle; b, Basket for Divining Set; c, Charm Bracelet; d, Charm Necklace; e, Charm for General Good Fortune; f, Charm in Form of Coffin; g, Charm for Good Health; h, Cupping Horn; i, Hat of *Salamanga*; k, Post for Sacrifice of First Rice (*fanora*); l, Post for Circumcision Sacrifice.

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When the figure has been completed, the sick person stands or sits facing the east and holds out his hands side by side, the palms upward and slightly cupped. The *ombiasy* scrapes dust from the *hazomanga* into his hands, or pours into them water with which the dust has been mixed. The person then prays: "Oh *Zanahary*, I beg pardon of you with both hands, holding the *hazomanga*. Be so good as to pardon me and cure me, for I ask this of you with the *hazomanga* in my hands." After this the *ombiasy* interprets the figure. A relative may act as proxy if the sick person is unable to be present.

Each of the sixteen positions in the figure has a name and significance, as follows:

1. *Taley*: "First" or "head," represents the head of the family.
2. *Mady*: "Wealth" or "medicine," sense of something good.
3. *Fahatelo*: "Third," significance of a relative of the sick person.
4. *Bilady*: "Land," "country," or "native place."
5. *Fianahana*: "Children."
6. *Abidy*: "Old woman."
7. *Betsimishe*: "Wife."
8. *Fahavalo*: "Enemy," also used in the sense of the illness.
9. *Fahasivy*: "Ancestors."
10. *Ombiasy*: The person who has made the *sikidy*.
11. *Haza*: "Food."
12. *Andriamanitra* (or *Zanahary*): "God."
13. *Sholiana*: "Very old person."
14. *Shedy*: "Young person."
15. *Safary*: "Road" or "journey."
16. *Trano*: "House," also used in sense of home or dwelling.

The number of seeds in each pile is also significant. One seed is called *Tareky* ("one only"). It indicates weakness. Two seeds are *Asimbola*, name of a month. This is the most favorable arrangement. Three seeds are *Alakarabo*, also the name of a month. It indicates strength but also that there will be difficulties.

In interpreting the *sikidy* one position is taken as representing the person on whose behalf the divination is made. If it is a man, this position will be *Taley* (1); if a woman, *Betsimishe* (7); if an old woman, *Abidy* (6); if a child, *Fianahana* (5), etc. The *ombiasy* observes the number of seeds in this position, then deduces the result from this and from the other positions in which the same number of seeds occur.

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Let us suppose that a sick man has come to ask the cause and cure of his illness and the figure has come out as follows:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
○○	○○	○	○	○	○○	○	○○
16	**15**	**14**	**13**	**12**	**11**	**10**	**9**
○○	○○○	○	○○○	○	○○○	○○	○

Taley (1) is taken as the key. The number of seeds in this position is *Asimbola*, a favorable sign indicating that the cure will not be difficult. The same sign occurs in the positions *Mady* ("medicine"), *Abidy* ("old woman"), *Fahavalo* ("enemy"), *Ombiasy* ("doctor"), and *Trano* ("house"). The arrangement would be interpreted to mean that the sickness has been caused by an old woman who is an enemy and has secreted a charm in the house. It can be cured by medicine administered by the *ombiasy*. The interpretation is always by a similar association of ideas. If seeds of the same number as the key appear in a position which seems to have no bearing on the question, they may be ignored.

In the more complicated seed *sikidy* any sort of grain may be used. After an invocation, which was not obtained, the operator takes a handful of the seeds and draws them aside two at a time, putting the remainder (one or two) in the upper right hand corner of a square figure. He repeats this until he has made a vertical line of four places, then begins another vertical line to the left of the first and continues until there are four lines. The completed figure contains eight lines, four vertical and four horizontal.

The arrangement of seeds in each line has a special significance. There are sixteen possible groupings of combinations of one and two in four places. These groupings are arranged in four divisions which are known as *trano* (lit. "houses"). Each *trano* is named after one of the cardinal points.

THE FOUR TRANO

EAST

1	2	3
○○	○○	○○
○	○○	○
○	○	○○
○○	○	○○

WEST

1	2	3	4	5
○○	○○	○	○	○○
○	○	○○	○○	○○
○○	○	○○	○	○○
○	○	○	○	○

NORTH

1	2	3	4
○	○	○	○○
○○	○○	○	○○
○	○○	○	○
○○	○○	○○	○○

SOUTH

1	2	3	4
○○	○	○	○
○○	○	○	○
○○	○	○○	○○
○○	○	○○	○

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755 787 The names and meanings of the figures in the divisions are as follows:

EASTERN TRANO, *Tantinana*

1. *Alitsimae.*—This sign has power to keep in their place enemies or robbers. It is a strong agent.
2. *Dabara.*—Significance same as above, but less strong.
3. *Alahamora.*—Significance same as above, but it is feeble and a sign of decadence.

WESTERN TRANO, *Tahandrefana*

1. *Alahotse.*—Sign of coolness or good health. It is also called *sikidy maintsy* ("cool sikidy"). It is always favorable.
2. *Alikaosy.*—Sign of death or other great evil. If the *sikidy* is made for an illness, the sick person will die.
3. *Alokola.*—Sign of a sickness called *hanem-boky*, caused by eating food offered by a married person who has committed adultery. The stomach swells. To cure it the guilty one confesses and draws a vertical line on the victim's stomach with white earth.
4. *Anakarabo.*—Sign of cries of pleasure or joy or of an illness called *birike*, which makes one weep. (This sign was formerly counted as 4 in the eastern *trano*, but was ill-treated and changed to the western *trano*. Some practitioners still place it in the eastern *trano*. In that house it is feeble and a sign of decadence.)
5. *Alikisy.*—Sign of good news. An enemy has been defeated, a girl will accept you as lover, etc.

NORTHERN TRANO, *Antavaratse*

1. *Adalo.*—Sign of glory or that one will occupy a place of honor.
2. *Alimiza.*—Foretells the possession of many oxen or other wealth, or indicates that one will be honored by the king.
3. *Karija.*—A very good sign. One will get everything one wants.
4. *Alibeavo.*—Sign that one will be protected from ghosts.

SOUTHERN TRANO, *Antatsimo*

1. *Asimbola.*—Sign of alarm and burning.
2. *Tareke.*—Sign that one is loved by women and has fallen into complete indolence.
3. *Alahasade.*—Sign of the hunt. One will kill game or succeed in enterprises.
4. *Alikasajy.*—Sign of a slave, also of a short alarm, or a combat which begins and ends suddenly.

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The position of each line in the figure also has a special significance. Let us suppose that the following figure has been formed:

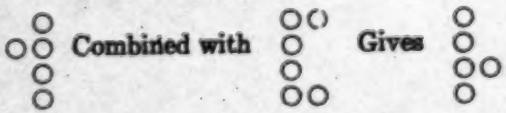
The meaning of the position is as follows:

1. Earth.
2. Brother.
3. Goods or wealth.
4. Chief (represents the person for whom divination is made).
5. Child.
6. Servant or slave.
7. Woman.
8. Enemy.

The arrangements in the horizontals are read from left to right.

In interpreting the figure position 4 is taken as the key. The significance of the arrangement is first noted by the *ombiasy* and then the figure is consulted to see whether the same arrangement occurs in any other position. If so, this position will be of the greatest importance. If there is no agreement of this sort, as in the example given, one notes the arrangements which fall in the same *trano* as the arrangement in the key position. In this case the arrangement in the key position is *Alahasade*, No. 3 in the southern *trano*. The only other arrangement belonging to the same *trano* is *Alikasajy* (No. 4) which occurs in horizontal 5. The figure reads "successful hunt" in the key position and "slave" or "short combat" in the child position. This will be interpreted by the *ombiasy* in the light of the question. The signs are neither very good nor very bad.

After the first reading, a second figure is formed as follows: Two arrangements are compared place by place. If the sum of the seeds in the two places is even, two seeds are put in this place in the new row. If the sum is odd, one seed is put in the place. Thus:



In the new figure there are eight groupings. The example shown here is derived from the figure previously given.

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11	13	12	17	14	16	15	18
○	○○	○	○	○	○	○○	○○
○	○○	○	○○	○	○○	○	○
○	○○	○	○○	○○	○○	○○	○○
○○	○○	○○	○	○○	○	○	○

The new groupings are formed by combining the original groupings as follows:

Groups in positions			7	and	8	give group in position			11
"	"	"	5	"	6	"	"	"	12
"	"	"	11	"	12	"	"	"	13
"	"	"	1	"	2	"	"	"	14
"	"	"	3	"	4	"	"	"	15
"	"	"	14	"	15	"	"	"	16
"	"	"	13	"	16	"	"	"	17
"	"	"	17	"	4	"	"	"	18

The positions in the new figure have the following meanings:

11. Spirit or ghost.
12. Food.
13. *Ombiasy* (the practitioner himself).
14. Father.
15. Road.
16. Mother, or reunion.
17. God.
18. House or home.

The new figure is compared with the *trano* given by position 4 in the original figure and groupings not in this *trano* are ignored. In the example only one position and grouping are significant: *Asimbola* (1 in south *trano*), which means alarm or burning. It occurs in position 13, representing the practitioner. It reinforces the "short combat" significance of the grouping in position 5 in the original figure.

Interpretation is by association of ideas. Apparently there is some variation in the practice of different *ombiasy*. Although the names of the groupings are always the same, the significances may vary somewhat. The methods of combining to give the second figure are also somewhat variable. In most of the tribes which use this method these features appear to be stereotyped and I suspect that the Tanala variations are due to an imperfect knowledge of the system.

DETERMINATION OF LUCKY AND UNLUCKY DAYS

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One of the main duties of the *ombiasy* is to determine propitious days for sacrifices, the commencement of enterprises, etc. The

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destiny of a child is also determined by the day of its birth and the *ombiasy* must discover what this is, and, if evil, take steps to change it. 777 791

The Tanala year consists of twelve lunar months called *volona* (lit. "moon"). These run continuously and there seems to be no idea of the year beginning with any one of them. The Menabe month names are as follows: 805

January, *Vatravatra*	May, *Afosa*	September, *Shakave*
February, *Asotry*	June, *Bolaha*	October, *Volambita*
March, *Hatsiha*	July, *Maka*	November, *Sharamasina*
April, *Valasira*	August, *Shakashe*	December, *Sharamanitra*

The month begins with the new moon and continues twenty-eight days. Each month is characterized by certain climatic features, the blooming of a certain plant, etc., and when the month count seems to lag too far behind the seasons a month is repeated. This is done informally and by general consent. There is no central authority to which the rectification of the calendar can be referred. Each month is divided into four weeks of seven days.

Among the Menabe the month count is only used incidentally in determining lucky and unlucky days. At the present time the better practitioners use a regular calendar based on the position of the days in the month, but all informants agreed that this is a recent innovation, learned from the Antaimorona tribe. I did not learn how the significance of birth days was determined in ancient times. Lucky days for activities were determined as follows: 777 805 [177]

The time from new to full moon was propitious for sacrifices and beginning enterprises; the time while the moon was waning was not propitious. Thursdays and Sundays were also unpropitious and children born on these days had a bad destiny. In appointing the time for a sacrifice or beginning an enterprise the latter half of the month and Thursdays and Sundays were eliminated. The *ombiasy* then selected one of the remaining days at random and made the shorter form of seed *sikidy*. If the arrangement ○○ *Asimbola* appeared in the positions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12 and 16, the day was propitious. The *sikidy* was repeated five times and if this arrangement did not appear, another day was tried. 777 787

The calendar now used to determine lucky and unlucky days is as follows, the month beginning on Monday. 777 805

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Friday, January 1, 1904, was, in the Tanala style, the second day 805
of the tenth week of the sixth month of the year *Adalo* (the first year of a cycle). Once this correspondence has been established it is easy to prepare a comparative calendar.

To count the days, the *ombiasy* has a piece of bamboo pierced with twenty-eight holes, arranged in groups of two or three, according to the number of days in each week. A pin is used as a marker, being moved daily.

The Menabe apparently lack such bamboo calendars, but keep day counts by means of notched wooden tallies and knotted strings. These are sometimes used for other numerical records as well.

DIVINATION BY THE STARS

The Tanala Menabe do not forecast events from the stars, but 787
they know that such divination exists and believe it to be effective. Apparently it is sometimes practiced by visiting *ombiasy* of the Antaimorona tribe, but they guard the secret. Information received from the Tanala is based on hearsay. They say that divination by the stars requires a lifetime of study, and that one who devotes himself to it must expect many years of poverty. He must go out to watch the stars every clear night, so has to sleep in the daytime and cannot work on his land. The student of the stars goes to a high open place and keeps glancing at the sky and then glancing away again. He must not look at the stars long or fixedly, for each man has one which is his special watcher or guardian and if he looks directly at this he will die. Even among the Antaimorona I was unable to learn whether there were any fixed rules for this divination.

SPELLS

A very striking feature of Tanala magic is the almost complete 788
absence of any belief in the efficacy of spoken formulae. Practically all magical practices are associated with some material object, which is the source of the power exercised. Even in the manufacture of charms spoken formulae are rare and, when used, they are variable in form and are considered of little importance.

MANUFACTURE AND USE OF CHARMS

The Tanala believe that the future is fixed by Fate, but also in the 777
efficacy of charms. I have never found an *ombiasy* who was conscious 789
of this inconsistency until I brought it to his attention. Even when the course of coming events has been determined by divination, the

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powder on the middle of his forehead, on either cheek and on his tongue. In general, the only charms which will be discarded are evil ones which have accomplished their object.

Charms for the family or lineage are much less numerous than those for the individual. Nearly all such groups seem to have *ody andro* (charms to bring general good fortune), which are kept in the dwelling of the family head. There are also charms against hail and locusts. Apparently one family or individual in each village will have such a charm which is used for the benefit of the whole group. The locust charm, *ody valala*, consists of a small basket containing scrapings from the roots and shoots of a plant called *ramanjavana*. The name means "to make clouds," because a little vapor flies up when the plant is cut. When a locust swarm is sighted, the charm is brought out and hung on a pole on the side of the *kianza* ("village square") from which the locusts are coming. A fire is made under it with the leaves of the same plant, producing dense clouds of smoke. The charm against hail was not learned. Among the pagan Imerina, every village had its hail and locust charms, each with its guardian, who received a small subsidy from the inhabitants.

Every Tanala village has a charm and many have two. The main charm is called the *tepanony*. Some famous *ombiasy* is called in to make it at the time the village is founded. He determines the proper materials by divination, pounds them together, adds a piece of silver money, and then buries the whole in the center of the *kianza* ("village square"). Over the charm are planted roots of four plants, the *sonjo* ("taro"), *sody fafana, ahibita*, and *arivotombelona*. The spot is usually enclosed by a little rectangle of stone slabs set on edge. In some villages the plants are watered and tended, in others they have been allowed to die. If the village moves as a whole, the *tepanony* is usually dug up and reinterred at the new site. The *tepanony* protects the village from pestilence, also from lightning and malevolent ghosts, if the divination has shown that there will be danger from these at the site chosen. It does not protect from enemy attack.

The second village charm is known as the *kovavy* and has the special function of protecting from enemies. Apparently most villages had a *kovavy* in ancient times, but with the establishment of peace they have become unnecessary and have mostly disappeared. The *kovavy* was placed in a small fenced enclosure just outside the principal gate. Apparently the form was rather variable. In a few cases it seems to have been a wooden image, set with its face toward

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621 the path. That at Ambohimanga, the former capital of the Tanala
● 787 Menabe, was made from various leaves buried in the earth. Over
777 this a large-leaved plant, also called the *kovavy*, was planted. Each year the top of the plant was cut off and the bark scraped from the stump for 2 or 3 inches below. The right ear of an ox was cut and blood from it rubbed on the stump. Leaves were plucked from the plant, pounded, and mixed with water which was given to the ox to drink. The ox was the property of the village *ombiasy* and the same one was used each year. After this inoculation the ox was turned loose in the forest. The ox was restless, wandering constantly, and whenever he crossed the trail of an enemy coming to attack the village he would begin bellowing and would come at once to the *kovavy* and stand there bellowing. The direction from which he came showed that from which the enemy was coming and the villagers would have time to prepare for the attack.

777 In addition to the types of charms just outlined there were
342 charms to bless houses and bring fortune to their inhabitants. These were buried on the site before the house was built.

825 The crocodiles in the Manandriana River were rendered innocuous
777 by a charm thrown into the river long ago. The *fady* for this charm was that in crossing the river one must paddle with a spade or axe instead of a regular paddle and that one must not wash a *lamba mena* ("shroud") in it. So long as these rules were observed the crocodiles did no damage, but they have been ignored since the coming of the French, with the result that crocodiles now carry off domestic animals, although they still do not attack people.

The native name for charms in general is *tamango*, *mohara* or *ody*, the terms being used interchangeably.

HEALING

755 One of the principal duties of the *ombiasy* is healing. When a person becomes ill he goes to the *ombiasy*, or sends for him, and pays an advance fee of 1.20 to 1.50 francs, arranging at the same time for a larger fee to be paid after the cure. The *ombiasy* makes the *sikidy* to learn the cause of the illness and prescribes from his knowledge, or, if the case is not clear, makes the *sikidy* a second time to find the remedy. The remedy is usually a mixture of herbs, compounded as a charm. Part of the charm is put in water. The sick person drinks some of this and bathes his whole body with the rest. Another part of the medicine is done up in a little cloth bag and worn around the patient's neck. There is always a *fady* which the patient

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The breaking of a village *fady* entails injury to the whole village and may be punished by a fine or by rough handling on the part of the villagers. However, there seems to be no attempt at purification. The breaking of a gens *fady* affects only the person who has broken it. If forbidden food has been eaten, the offender puts a silver bracelet in water and then gargles with the water, saying: "I have eaten something forbidden, and for this reason I gargle with silver water. I wash myself now that I may be purified and that the offense may not cause me illness or accident." The purification is performed in private and neither gods nor ancestors are invoked.

Fady are imposed by *ombiasy* or by an ancestor upon his descendants. Apparently there is no method by which they can be revoked. The only thing which corresponds to the temporary and revokable taboos which are such an important feature of Polynesian culture is the prohibition which a person may put upon entering his house. If a man wishes to be undisturbed, he will set up a ring of grass or vine in a cleft stick outside the door. The observance of such a prohibition is simply a matter of good manners and the custom seems to have no religious implications.

OMENS

The Tanala pay relatively little attention to signs or omens. Those which are recognized are known to everyone. A man may sometimes consult an *ombiasy* to learn the meaning of some peculiar and unnatural happening which he feels must be significant, but I could not learn that *ombiasy* themselves ever consult omens before coming to a decision. They believe the *sikidy* to be so effective that all other forms of divination are unnecessary.

The commonest and most generally recognized omens are as follows: If one sees an *antsangoa* (a species of large walking stick insect) it is a sign of approaching death in his family or village. This is because the legs of the animal stretch out in front and behind like the poles of a bier. The size of the animal indicates the importance of the person who will die and its color that of the shroud in which the body will be wrapped.

If a snake called *fandiovarika* (a small species about 2 to 2½ feet long and 1 inch in diameter) crosses one's path or enters the house, a member of the family will die.

If a person going on a journey sees a crocodile lying in the sun, it is a sure sign that he will die on the journey.

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787 825 If a hen lays a very small egg, or eats its eggs, or crows, it is a sign of danger, sickness or death in the family.

After the *kovavy* ("guard an charm") was set up at Ambohimanga, if a single crow flew over the village it was a sign that enemy scouts were near. If there were two or more crows, the enemy was at a distance and would not arrive. If a wild boar or lemur came to the village of its own accord, it was a sign of great and imminent danger. This only happened once, in the time of Queen Iovana, and an ox was sacrificed to the ancestors at once to avert the evil.

DREAMS

787 The significance attached to dreams of ancestors has already been discussed. Other dreams were interpreted as actual experiences of the *ambiroa* and were not considered ominous. I could learn of no instances of dream interpretation.

INSANITY AND SPIRIT POSSESSION

828 158 There is a very sharp distinction in the native mind between spirit possession and insanity. The latter is believed to be due to the absence of the normal personality, equated with the soul. Although the insane are usually well treated, they receive no special respect and are not thought to be under spirit protection. Formerly those who were violent or otherwise troublesome, or who appeared to be suffering, were put to death as painlessly as possible. This was considered a merciful act. At the present time even the more conservative tribes usually send their insane to be cared for by the government.

787 158 All the Malagasy believe in spirit possession, but its importance in the culture pattern varies considerably with the tribe. The idea appears to be most developed among the Sakalava, on the west coast, moderately strong among the plateau tribes, and weak among those of the southeast coast. The Antaifasina, who belong to the last-named group, insisted that they were unfamiliar with it prior to about 1910, when it was introduced by tribesmen who had worked on west coast plantations. Some of these men became possessed by Sakalava spirits, who returned with them. Even now, many of the Antaifasina claim to be possessed by the souls of Sakalava chiefs and speak Sakalava during their seizures. In view of the unquestionable antiquity of spirit possession among the other east coast tribes, it seems probable that the idea was already present, but received a great impetus from the Sakalava contact. It could not have been

very strong, however, for the Antaifasina say that they are unable to cure the malady and are accustomed to turn over the victims to the French medical authorities for treatment.

The ceremonial side of spirit possession is most highly developed among those tribes which show the most African influence and it seems possible that the whole idea is ultimately traceable to Africa. However, it has become thoroughly incorporated into the native culture. I never heard a non-Christian native express scepticism regarding it and even the Christians are convinced of its reality and treat it by prayer and exorcism.

Spirit possession is always intermittent. Physically it is characterized by trembling and twitching, increasing in violence until the subject begins to dance. The attack usually ends in unconsciousness and rigidity. When the subject is revived he is normal and has no memory of what has occurred. A few of the victims may be true epileptics, but in most cases they seem to suffer from nothing more than acute hysteria. A Tanala woman of the Manandriana gens told me that she might become possessed at any time or place. Her heart would begin to beat violently and everything before her eyes would become wavering and indistinct "as though she were looking through heat waves in strong sunlight." When this happened she knew that the possessing spirit was coming and would begin to dance. She had never seen or heard the spirit and this was the only way in which she was conscious of its presence. Ratzakoba, a Tanala informant of the Zafindiamanana gens, told me that a person subject to possession would begin to tremble and twitch when he heard a drum, or a person crying, or when he felt any strong emotion, as joy at the return of a long-absent relative. All informants agreed that the malady was contagious and that if one person became possessed all those present who were subject to possession would also be attacked. I witnessed a case of this sort during a ceremony at the royal Sakalava tombs at the village of Mahabo. A woman became possessed and a man near her was seized almost immediately. As he was a person of importance all attention was centered on him and the woman recovered in a few minutes without help. Among the Imerina there was a great epidemic of possession in 1863–64, which seems to have been quite comparable to some episodes in medieval European history.

Satisfactory accounts of spirit possession and the methods for its cure were obtained from the Zafindiamanana and Manandriana gentes of the Tanala Menabe. It is known to occur with at least equal frequency among the Ikongo, but no exact information was

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available. It seems to play a relatively unimportant role in the culture of the Menabe and the native attitude toward it is much the same as that toward any other disease. Although the possessed receive much care and attention during the seizure, to be subject to possession decreases rather than increases the prestige of the individual. Even persons who give oracles while possessed are, with few exceptions, rated below the regular *ombiasy* ("medicine-men"). All informants agreed that a person who was not subject to possession would make no attempt to become so.

There can be little doubt that spirit possession is becoming more frequent at the present time. This is probably due in part to increased contact with tribes who hold the concept. Thus Raindranaivo, my best informant from the Manandriana gens, says that the ceremonial features of possession have been taken over by his gens from the Betsileo, some of whom now live among them, and that the frequency of possession has greatly increased within his adult memory, about fifty years. Emotional stresses resulting from the break-up of the old culture may also play a part, for the epidemic outbreaks of possession among the Imerina occurred at the time when European culture began to make itself felt as a menace.

In both gentes the term *salomanga* is applied indiscriminately to the malady, the spirit causing it, the person suffering from it (during the time he is possessed), and the ceremony for its cure. The Zafindramanana recognize two types of *salomanga*, the ordinary one and the *salomanga sakaleo*, in which the possessed gives spirit messages, directions for making medicines, etc., during the seizure.

There seems to be a good deal of confusion about the spirits causing the ordinary *salomanga*. In general they are regarded as ancestral, but there seems to be no complete agreement on this, or as to whether more than one spirit can possess the same individual at different times. The ordinary *salomanga* usually does not know who his possessing spirit is. He is seized without warning and will drop whatever he is doing and run toward the village tomb or to some near-by lake or river, where he plunges in. His relatives pursue him and carry him back to the village bodily. Once there, he is released and begins to dance. If the bystanders do not sing and clap, to help him, he falls unconscious and becomes rigid, as though dead. After the victim has danced for a time and begins to show signs of exhaustion, one of his relatives takes the *hasomanga* (see p. 187), scrapes it with the regular invocation, and puts the dust in water. The victim drinks some of this and pours the rest over his head. He recovers

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at once. The Zafindiamanana have no charms to prevent possession 158 787
and say that no permanent cure is possible.

The *mianongo mahaleo* is always possessed by a known ancestral 756
spirit. In many cases he is a regular practitioner who can throw him- 829
self into the *mianongo* state at will. The Zafindiamanana seem to use the terms *mianongo mahaleo* and *ombiasy mdolo* as synonymous, although in other *gentes* the latter term has a different significance (see *Ombiasy*). However, they rate such persons below the regular *ombiasy* and say that the profession is dangerous, often leading to insanity.

The *mianongo mahaleo* seems to occupy himself mainly with 756
curing diseases. The situation is explained to him before the seizure comes on. During the attack he behaves like the ordinary *mianongo*, but if he runs to water at the onset of the possession he will dive to the bottom and bring up something from it. This will be the medicine for the malady. After he has been brought back, and while he is dancing, his spirit will answer questions or declare the cause and cure of the sickness. Finally, he is cured with *fanonongo* water, like the regular *mianongo*.

Among the Manandriana the ideas and practices connected with 753
the *mianongo* are much more elaborate. They call the ordinary 755
mianongo (without messages) *bilo*. It manifests itself by violent twitchings and a compulsion to dance. It may attack people while they are asleep or seriously ill in bed. It may also be brought on by eating the first of the new rice or maize at harvest time. Sometimes, apparently, the *ombiasy* diagnoses an illness as *bilo* when the ordinary symptoms are lacking. When the attack commences the *ombiasy* ("medicine-man") employs the *sikidy* ("divination") to discover what sort it is. There are three varieties, *andiko*, *andamalaza* and *evoloia*, which are the same in symptoms but differ in treatment. Apparently the real difference lies in the strength and obstinacy of the possessing spirit, but Raindranaivo remarked cynically that rich people were usually possessed by the *andiko*, which required the longest and most expensive ceremony.

The cure of *mianongo andiko* is as follows: A bed in the form 755
of a stretcher is hung from the roof of the house in such a position that its edge will be against the north side of the center post and its head east. Directly over the ordinary fireplace another fireplace is made. This is a platform raised on four posts about 2 feet high and covered with a mat. On the mat is a square enclosure of boards full of earth in which stone tripods for two pots are planted. One tripod

155 787 The *salamanga mesule* is a form of possession by an ancestral spirit. The spirit speaks through the person possessed and prophesies coming misfortunes to the entire group such as pestilence, floods or the attack of an enemy. The *mesule* carries a staff with which he points out where hid ody ("charms") are hidden. During the seizure he is "like an *ombiasy*" ("medicine-man") but the state cannot be induced and he is not consulted regularly. A peculiarity of this form is that no one may wear a hat while the *mesule* is dancing. If he sees a person wearing one he tries to take it off and, failing in this, falls unconscious. He is revived by drinking and being asperged with water containing medicine.

158 218 The *salamanga sakaiana* is rare and occurs only in the north. It is also due to possession by an ancestral spirit, but the possessed does not prophesy. The movements are the most violent of all and the victim vomits blood. This is caught and carefully kept, for if any of it falls on the ground the victim will die at once. Informants did not know the method of cure for this variety.

304 852 539 "An ox with sharp horns and red eyes always attacks." This would make the boys grow into strong, brave and warlike men. Another song was:

Rango, raza, rongo,
Zaza rangoina tsimarera.

"Sing, child, sing. A singing child does not bleed much." This warded off excessive bleeding. In this singing two or three persons sang the verse, and the whole company came in on the last word, the 852 usual Malagasy method. Everyone feasted but there was little 304 drinking, for decorum had to be preserved. It was expressly for- [834] bidden for the people in the north half of the house to have sexual relations during the night, even if they were man and wife, and for them to quarrel or make obscene remarks. Persons who broke these rules were fined 5.00 francs, for it would cause the children to bleed badly.

In the early morning, before sunrise, all the people from the north side of the house went down to the river, singing and dancing as they went. The group consisted of the children, each with his bearer, either six or twelve young women, and a guard of spearsmen, one for each child. The child was carried by a male relative: his maternal uncle, paternal uncle, father or elder brother, in order of desirability. The young women might be either married or unmarried, but must have fortunate names. The spearsmen were chosen for their prowess and did not have to be relatives. They were armed with spear and shield and wore a strip of raw meat, from the previous day's sacrifice, over the left shoulder and across the breast, like a bandoleer. This was to show that the children were of rich families and that meat was abundant. When the group arrived at the river the children's penises were washed. Men dipped up water and gave it to the girl water carriers in horn drinking cups which were either white or spotted with white earth. This water was called *ranoandriana* ("water of the fall"), but any running water would do if it was taken so early in the morning that "no bird had passed over it." On the return the spearsmen went first, then the girls carrying water, then the children, carried so that they faced forward. Outside the village the procession was met by the people from the southern half of the *trano* be armed with spears, sharp bamboos and stones. There was a regular fight [721] in which people were often injured or even killed. If one of the spearsmen was wounded or fell, it was a bad omen for the child he represented, who would have a misfortune in war. Finally the column forced its way into the village.

XIII. PROVERBS

The Tanala, like all the Malagasy, have a great number of proverbs. No speech in council is complete without them and they are constantly quoted in bargaining and in disputes. When men are angry, they will go on for half an hour or more, quoting them and each capping the other's proverb with one favorable to his side of the argument. Cleverness in this seems to be greatly admired and by the time one or the other runs out, good humor has usually been restored. The following series gives only a small part of those in common use, but will serve to show their type. 538

1. *Fotsir'ondany n'olombelo, n'ies ire, n'abo abo.* "Men are like the sacrifice posts in the rice fields, some are long and others short." Applied tolerantly to individual differences in opinion and behavior.

2. *Lodim-bontsao ny viavy izao tany izao amatsahany aby.* "Women are like the gourd vine, they bear children everywhere."

3. *Sikidin Ratrangitrangy dia my omaly koa.* "Whenever Ratrangitrangy casts his *sikidy* to find the condition of a patient it says 'His health is the same as yesterday.'" Applied to an equivocal answer.

4. *Sikidy tsara tay andikan, sikidy ratsy tay amonoom-po.* "A favorable *sikidy* does not make him dance or an unfavorable one make him despair." Applied to one with a set purpose.

5. *Tsy misy nonak'ombiasy tsy ho voan'ny ai (rintsana) ary: Tsy misy nonako amoyotsy tsy ho main'ny tsirim-by.* "One must not think that he will not die because he is the child of an *ombiasy* [medicine-man], or that he will not be burned because he is the child of a smith."

6. *Tamongo'ao tsy mba manoko; fa ny tamongoniny no manoko.* "The *tamongo* [a fetish] does not waken everyone. It wakens only its owner."

7. *Any tsy nampako namoky ny rano.* "He arrives without invitation, as though sent by the ancestors."

8. *Atody mampopoy: ala mahafaty ray, apetraka mahafaty ray.* "It is like the eggs of the *mampopoy* [a large ground bird of very bad omen]. To take them is to kill one's mother, to leave them is to kill one's father." [715]

9. *Rinonako nandalo tawo ray.* "When Ranako passes the whole village burns."